REMARKS

The first Office Action, mailed February 24, 2004, considered and rejected claims 1-27. Following this paper, claims 1-8 and 9-29 are presented for reconsideration.

Claims 1-6, 8-15, 17-23 and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Powell ("LPRng-How To"), while claims 7, 16 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Powell and Pang (U.S. Patent No. 6,446,204)[1].

Claims 1-27 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for certain informalities, which have been addressed by this amendment. For example, the assertion that "the server computer system" lacked antecedent basis has been addressed by replacing the term "the server" with the term "a server." The objected to claim language "and/or", in claims 1, 9 and 19, has been addressed by deleting the term '/or.' The objected to language "using at least" has also been addressed by replacing it with the language "using the at least one".

Claims 5, 14 and 22 were objected to because it was not clear to the Examiner what NTLM meant. Applicants point out, however, that the specification clearly indicates that NTLM refers to the WINDOWS NT ® LAN Manager authentication method. (Page 3, ll. 23-24). Accordingly, the reference to NTLM has not amended by this paper. Finally, claims 8, 17 and 25 were rejected because it was not clear to the Examiner whether they were independent or dependent claims. In this regard, Applicants point out that claims 8, 17 and 25 were presented as independent claims incorporating the methods recited in corresponding method claims 1, 9 and 18.

Finally, the specification was also objected to for certain informalities that have been fixed by this amendment. In particular, the hyperlink references found in pages 21-22 have been replaced with generic references to a Schema URL and Aliases URLs.

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[1] Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art. Furthermore, with specific regard to Pang, Applicants point out that the rejections of record should already be overcome by the arguments made with respect to Powell. Accordingly, specific arguments directed to Pang are not been presented herein, particularly since Pang is only cited by the Examiner as a secondary reference for the proposition that a client request can comprise a data structure representing an XML element. (claims 7 and 24).

The Office Action also requested a new Oath and Declaration to replace the Oath and Declaration that was originally filed with the application. A new requested Oath and Declaration has been prepared and is included with the filing of this amendment.

By this paper, claims 1, 18, 26 and 27 have been amended, claims 9-17 have been cancelled, and new claims 28-29 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1-8 and 18-29 remain pending for reconsideration, of which claims 1, 8, 18, 25 and 26 are the independent claims at issue.

The claims are generally directed to methods for authenticating client computing systems to a server computing system. The method recited in claim 1, which corresponds to the computer-readable medium of claim 8, is recited from the perspective of a server-side computer system that receives a request from a client with instructions on how to authenticate a subset of client computer systems when the subset of client computer systems subsequently request service from the server. According to the recited method, the server receives a subsequent request from the subset of client computer systems for service and thereafter authenticates the requesting subset of the client computer systems using the at least one authentication methodology identified in the initial request.

The method recited in claim 18, corresponding to the computer-readable medium of claim 25, is similar to the method of claim 1, but is recited from the perspective of the client-side computer system that is in communication with the server and that creates and sends the initial request.

The last independent claim (claim 26) is directed to a computer-readable medium having a data structure that can be used during implementation of the methods recited in previous claims and that includes fields for identifying clients and authentication methodologies.

The amendments to the claims include adding claim language that clarifies how instructions identifying the at least one authentication methodology that are to be used by the server are received by the server in an initial request and prior to the server receiving a subsequent request for service from one of the subset of client systems.

Amendments to claims 26 and 27 also clarify how the data structure storing the authentication information includes a plurality of client identifier fields that identify the plurality of different client computer systems. As recited in new claim 28, the server has access to the data structure prior to receiving a request for service from the client. The data structure can also

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be altered, as recited in new claim 29. Support for the new claim amendments is found in the following passages, as well as other passages throughout the specification: p. 18, ll. 19-22; p. 20, ll. 9-11, 19-27; p. 21, ll. 1-8; p. 22, ll. 22 – p. 23, ll. 10; and p. 23, ll. 4-7.

The primary reference cited by the Examiner, Powell, is generally directed to a program that provides print spooler functionality. The portions of the reference cited by the Examiner relate more specifically to authenticating a client requesting printing services. As recited in Powell, authentication "should be done during reception of commands and/or jobs from a remote user and/or spooler." (p. 1, Sect 12.1, ll. 1-2). In particular, when a print job is received, the server may authenticate the remote client by using the UserID and AuthID associated with the client. (Sect. 12.2).   According to one embodiment, Powell also teaches that the client can identify the file to be transferred along with a "use_auth" keyword that identifies an authentication type to be used for authenticating the client. (Sect.12.4, #6)

Unlike the presently recited claims, however, Powell makes no reference or suggestion that a server receives an initial client request that identifies an authentication methodology to use for authenticating a subset of client systems, as well as receiving a subsequent request for service from a subset of client systems, wherein the server authenticates the subset of client systems, upon receiving the subsequent request, by using the authentication methodology identified in the initial client request. Instead, Powell infers that any authentication request is actually included in the single client print/file transfer request. (p.1, sect 12.1, ll. 1-2).

Next, with regard to the data structure claim 26, Applicants respectfully submit that Powell fails to disclose or suggest a data structure having a plurality of client identifier fields that each identify a client computer system that is connected to a server computer system, and for each client computer system, the data structure further comprising at least one authentication field that identifies an authentication method to be used by the server computer system for authenticating the client computer system upon receiving a request from the client computer system for service, as claimed.

One benefit enabled by the embodiment recited in claim 26, is that a client computer can send a request to the server that can be used to create or alter (new claim 29) the data structure for controlling the authentication of a plurality of different client computers. The server can also access the data structure prior to receiving the client request for service (claim 28), so as, for example, to notify the client which authentication methods are acceptable. (p. 18, ln. 15 – p. 19,

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ln. 18). These claimed embodiments are neither suggested by nor contemplated by the cited Powell disclosure.

Finally, with regard to the rejections of dependent claims 2-5 and 19-22, which recite different types of authentication methods, Applicants respectfully submit that the disclosure cited by the Examiner does not mention or suggest using the recited authentication methods (e.g., assertion, basic HTTP, digest authentication, NTLM). Instead, other portions of Powell, recite PGP and Kerberos authentication methods as the types of authentication that are supported by Powell. Accordingly, in order to provide the Applicants a fair opportunity to respond to the Examiner's rejections, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner specifically point out how the cited disclosure found on page 2, lines 34-35 supports the rejections of record with regard to dependent claims 2-5 and 19-22.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims 1-8 and 18-29 are distinguished from the art of record and are, therefore, in condition for allowance. In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this *29* day of April 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

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